

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM ‘TALENT CARE IN THE SPIRIT OF KODÁLY’ AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHER TRAINING AT THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT OF THE ELTE UNIVERSITY

Summary: The Music Department of the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (founded in 1984) qualifies classroom music teachers for primary and secondary schools. Since the foundation of the department, the forms of the Hungarian teacher training education have been changed twice, but our goal has remained the same: to educate talented persons who could become creative music teachers.

The Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education (founded in 2002) elaborated its integrated arts education program based on the music pedagogy of Kodály and the latest researches of natural and social sciences – its renewing methods help children get an active participation in artistic experiences. The latest result of their work is a 30-hour course of postgraduate training for teachers under the title “Talent care in the spirit of Kodály”.

Universities teach students who (possibly) care for talented children in the future; so ‘caring for the caregivers’ should be nearly the most important task for the instructors’ work in teacher training. That is why the partnership in the development of creativity becomes a really creative partnership between the two institutions. The goal of this paper is to introduce the challenges, the progress and the results of the continuously coordinated work.

Key words: talent care, development of creativity, partnership of institutions, structures in teacher training, postgraduate teacher training program, integrated music education

1. Cooperation in the development of creativity: introducing the two partner Institutions

1.1. The Music Department of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Faculty of Humanities

The Music Department was founded at the former Teacher’s Training College in 1984. In these years, music teachers began to realize that “the ‘good’ crisis of the society caused a ‘bad’ crisis in the system of teaching” especially “in the officially and world-wide accepted musical education” (Bodnár 2008: 61), so strengthening the teacher training became one of the most important tasks again.

In the first decade, primary school teachers were trained in the new Department but after joining the Faculty of Humanities university level training also became available. Nowadays the School Music Teacher Degree Program has an MA-form (one can begin it after finishing the undergraduate program of music) and in September 2013 the so called unified education form starts as well, in which the students have to choose another degree program (e. g. English or History) in addition to music. A shorter postgraduate program also exists for teachers who have already gained their college diploma.

The aim of education can be defined with the following words: “Educating teachers, who are able to teach music in the field of the education and – based on their preparedness as

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choir conductors – lead choirs in schools, perform the tasks of music education in schools as well as being able to continue their studies in the doctoral education” (Bodnár (ed.) 2009: 9). In the curricula there are musical subjects such as Music theory and Solfège, Music history, Piano, Score reading, Conducting and Private voice training – besides the continuously renewed Methodology, since the methodology of the classroom music teacher training must always accommodate “to the circumstances indicating new purposes with new ways of approaching” (Bodnár 2006: 124).

One could also mention the mixed choir of the Music Department called ‘ELTE Pro Musica’, which has already achieved excellent results in numerous competitions in Hungary and abroad including the Grand Prix.

1.2. The Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education

The Psalmus Humanus Association (the name of the Organization was chosen after the title of a poem by a Hungarian scientist and a Nobel-prize winner Albert Szent-Györgyi, called Psalmus Humanus) was officially founded in 2002 and after five years it became a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and a member of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO. Its members are mainly music teachers specialized in different areas of art and education, so their work could represent the broad spectrum of arts education from the kindergarten to university.

The arts education program of the Psalmus Humanus is built on the fifty years of traditions of Hungarian singing and elementary music schools, and the most recent findings of research in natural sciences and sociology. The various arts workshops for children provide an opportunity – regardless of their cultural or social environment, or their health – to participate actively in a pleasurable artistic activity. In 2006 at the First World Conference on Arts Education organized in Lisbon (Portugal) with the title ‘Building Creative Capacities for the 21st Century’ the Association represented Hungarian music education – and it was also invited to the Second World Conference held in Seoul (Korea) in 2010.

1.3. The importance of the cooperation

In 2007–2008 the Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education and the Music Department of the ELTE University elaborated their project based on the thoughts and the method of Kodály and expanded that with the idea of integrated arts education. Nearly the most important element of this proposal is the recognition, that the part-programs could only give real achievement under a common control and regular discussion.

The main principle of the cooperation between the two Institutions could be described by a quotation from a speech delivered at a conference held for the opening of the Psalmus Humanus Consultation Centre in 2008:

“The pedagogic studios [...] are exemplaries for the symbiosis of education and culture. Beyond positive effects on the Hungarian society, substantial international advancements are to be expected from the proposed conjoint cross-border art pedagogical cooperation programs”.¹

In this year (2013), the possibility to start a postgraduate university course for teachers under the title ‘Talent Care in the Spirit of Kodály’ has also been opened where nearly all the lectures of the cooperating partners could be collected.

¹ The speech was delivered by Mr. Péter Gresiczki, former Secretary-General of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO (K. Udvari (ed.) 2008: 5).

2. Postgraduate program 'Talent care in the spirit of Kodály'

2.1. About the program in general

The postgraduate program 'Talent care in the spirit of Kodály' offers a rich methodical selection for the teachers and the institutions, because it considers the possibilities of their socio-cultural conditions.

The integrated arts education project of the Psalmus Humanus Association and the Music Department is built on the traditions of Hungarian singing and the most recent findings of research in natural sciences and sociology. The various art workshops for children provide an opportunity – regardless of their cultural and social environment – to participate actively in a pleasurable artistic activity. Therefore, the variable project is not strictly located, since it can also conform to the local (subjective and objective) possibilities – and it isn't isolated either, as it could be shaped by psychology, neurology, developing pedagogy and sociology (etc.).

During their activity the two cooperating partner Institutions always look for new paths. By graduating the program – through practical examples and performances – the participants acquire the ability to use a wide variety of arts education methods in public education. They also make sure that the integrated arts education could influence the education of other subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, foreign languages, etc.) – so in this way the participants become able to adopt this method in their teaching system according to their own possibilities and traditions. The participants could also make a plan about how to integrate the newly acquired knowledge and methods into their educational practice.

The postgraduate program is recommended for the following specialists: nursery school and schoolteachers, psycho-pedagogues, psychologists, or anybody working in the area of education.

2.2. The main elements of the multiple-part project

The most important parts of the postgraduate program 'Talent care in the spirit of Kodály' are the following:²

- Music education for 1–3 year old nursery school children, together with their parents.

- Kindergarten education (3–6 years), development of partial abilities through singing, music and movement (**"creative process of nursery rhymes or folk songs, listening to music accompanied by improvising motion, visualizing music in an individual way"**) (Szedlacsek, www.szedlacsekkatalin.hu)

- **Complex music education (6–14 years): introducing the 'Kokas Method'** ("Encourage the development and creative activity of harmonious personalities inspired by refined music, capable of self-expression and human contact, evolving with hope and a joy for life") (Deszpot, www.kokas.hu).

- Teaching singing within a primary school and in a music primary school (6–14 years).

- Teaching singing in English and German: connection between music and language teaching to 6–14 year old children.

- Teaching folk dance in elementary, music primary and secondary schools (6–18 years).

² Presented and demonstrated in detail in the DVD entitled *Psalmus Humanus – „Music Belongs to Everyone“* (K. Udvari (ed.), 2006) available through the website of the Association (www.psalmusarts.hu).

- Drama pedagogy: development of personal and social skills (12–18 years).
For those with disabilities and injuries:
 - Music education for motor disabled and for mentally challenged children.
 - Music education for children with special education needs with the ULWILA color note.
 - Music education for blind and visually impaired children (singing, music and dance).
- Other parts of the program:
- The care of musical work capacity ('Kovács Method' – special gymnastic exercises mainly for musicians "to maintain and develop their physical, spiritual, and mental abilities necessary to carry on a successful life and career, and to prevent occupational impairments") (<http://www.kovacsmethod.com>).
 - The application of computers in music education.
 - Children's concerts for expectant mothers.
 - Romany poetry and literature and free-time training in fine arts for Romany children.
- To overcome socio-cultural disadvantages:³
- Afternoon and free time artistic activities for children from disadvantaged cultural and social environments.

2.3. Conclusions

In Hungary – and in its neighboring countries as well – political and economic changes went on relatively fast and education has not always been able to follow these changes. The project could help this change efficiently and it could also focus on the question of 'diversity in unity', i.e. how children can be taught about their own culture and traditions in today's society (of globalization and informatics) contributing to the treasures of the world and connecting people. The program also demonstrates that art education has social and economic results.

On the other hand, integrated music education has become known and appreciated worldwide in the previous years – the fact has been proven by the numerous invitations for international conferences for the two partner Organizations. (Among the latest important events the conference 'The Role of Music Education in Music Therapy' in Lublin (Poland), 2012 – and of course the Methodical Days 2013 (Scientific conference 'Competences of Preschool Teachers in Knowledge Society') in Kikinda should be mentioned, where numerous members of the two Organizations could hold their presentations.)

The activity of the Music Department (Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Faculty of Humanities) and the Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education could be studied by viewing their homepages (www.psalmusarts.hu and www.music.elte.hu). The organizers of the program 'Talent care in the spirit of Kodály' are ready to make contacts with new partners either in the neighborhood of Hungary or all over the world to promote the success of education in music and art.

³ The artistic education of socially handicapped children is a really undiscovered area of the education in Hungary.

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